MARVEL
CONAN THE KING
$1.00
U.K. 50p
CAN. $1.25
22
MAY
Black Dragons

A WASTELAND MOOR OF THE BORDER KINGDOM NEAR THE GREAT SALT MARSH...

PREPARED TO DIE, BOY?

Stan Lee PRESENTS: The Black Dragons!

CONAN THE KING™ Vol. 1, No. 22, May, 1984. (U.S.P.S. 589-610) Published by MARVEL COMICS GROUP, James E. Galton, President, Stan Lee, Publisher, Michael Hobson, Vice-President, Publishing, Milton Schiffman, Vice-President, Production. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. **SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, N.Y. AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES.** Published bi-monthly. Copyright © 1984 by Conan Properties, Inc. The advertising and editorial material appearing on pages 5, 7, 10, 12, 30, 31, 37, 39, 42, 44, covers 2, 3, and 4 only, copyright © 1984 by Marvel Comics Group, a division of Cadence Industries Corporation. All rights reserved. STICK MAN™ and the distinctive likeness thereof is copyright © 1984 by Richard Parker. Used by permission. Price $1.00 per copy in the U.S. and $1.25 in Canada. Subscription rate $12.00 for 12 issues. **Canada and Foreign, $14.00** Printed in the U.S.A. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. **POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO CONAN THE KING, 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, 10TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016.**

YES, TARQUIN.

GOOD. THERE'S HOPE YOU'LL STAY ALIVE THEN...

...FOR IT'S CERTAIN NONE SEE MORE ADVENTURE THAN CONAN'S *BLACK DRAGONS*.

--NOR RISK DARKER DANGERS.

BY ICY YMIR, OUR CAPTAIN SPEAKS THE TRUTH THERE, LAD.

WE DRAGONS ARE THE KING'S PICK, HA! AS FAR ABOVE THE LEGIONNAIRES YOU'VE RISEN FROM AS A SNOW BEAR ABOVE RABBITS.

'TIL NOW, YOU'VE FOUGHT ONLY *MORTAL* FOES.

BUT SERPENTS TALL AS TEMPLES AND DEAD MEN'S SHAMBLING BONES, BERSERK BEAST-FOLK AND CREEPING THINGS UNKNOWN, HA, WE'VE FOUGHT THEM ALL AND LIVED TO TELL.

NAY, *HAROLF*, YOU MEAN MOST OF US WILL TELL.

AS FOR *SYAN-LIN* HERE--

-- NOT A CASK-FULL OF WINE AT THE KNIGHT'S HEAD INN WILL PLY MORE THAN TWO WORDS EVER FROM HIS LIPS...

...THOUGH, ERLIK KNOWS, HE FIGHTS LIKE A THOUSAND DEVILS.

STILL, BOY, PALLANTIDES OUR COMMANDER SPOKE HIGHLY OF YOU...

HA! BY ASGARD'S HOAR-FROST, CAPTAIN, HERE'S A TRIFLE TO PROVE HIS SOUL'S WORTH--!

BLAST! WE'D HA' BEEN BETTER OFF PAYIN' THEM BLEEDIN' HIGHWAY TAXES THAN TO BE RIDIN' THESE HAUNTED SWAMPS--

--AND LEAVIN' OUR HORSES TO SOME MONSTER OUT O' HELL!

HO! NOW I'LL WAGER ME GOOD EYE THE GODS SEND US RESCUE--

--KILL THESE BLACK DOGS AND WE'LL OWN THEIR SADDLES!

RUN! THEM'S CURSED DEMONS, NOT MEN!

HOW--?!

STIK
ST·K
STIK

ARRGGHH!

THAT WAS EASY ENOUGH... EH?

NEVER SHEATHE YOUR STEEL 'TIL YOU'VE COUNTED CORPSES--

DID YOU NOT MARK TEN OF THEM ALIVE, LAD?

BY YMIR, YOU'RE NOT TRAMPING RANK AND FILE ACROSS A BATTLEFIELD ANYMORE. LEARN TO WATCH YOUR BACK.

NOW, YOUNG ONE, LET'S KICK THIS WINESKIN TO *KING CONAN'S* SWIFT RECOVERY!

THE ROYAL CASTLE IN TARANTIA, CAPITAL OF AQUILONIA...

ZENOBIA...

QUIET, MY LOVE... THE PHYSICIAN ADVISES YOU TO REST...

CROM! THIS BEDDING... AND PAMPERING... IS NO WAY FOR A MAN...

...A MAN NEARLY KILLED BY A POISONED GOBLET,* CONAN. I'M GRATEFUL THAT YOU YET LIVE.

BESIDES... IT'S A RARE OCCASION WHEN YOU STAY IN ONE PLACE LONG ENOUGH TO BE PAMPERED!

YOU KNOW... THE RUMOR FLIES THAT YOU WERE PUNISHED BY MITRA FOR INSISTING ON THAT BARBARIC CEREMONY IN MITRA'S VERY TEMPLE...

*LAST ISH, --OWZ.

BAH! LET THE RABBLE CONJURE UP ANY TALE THEY PLEASE. I...

THE MARSHES!

I'D NEARLY FORGOTTEN... THE WITCH SPOKE...

CALM YOURSELF, MY LOVE. EVEN NOW THE BLACK DRAGONS ARE IN THE SALT MARSHES...

... LOOKING FOR WHATEVER IT IS THE WITCH SAID WOULD BE THERE, PLEASE CONAN... YOU MUST REST.

RADEGUND... AND TAURUS... WILL WISH TO SEE YOU TODAY. YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO FRIGHTEN THE CHILDREN... START THEM THINKING YOU'RE NOT MENDING!

GREETING CHILDREN AND NAPPING 'TWIXT SILK LINEN IS FOR WOMEN, ZENOBIA.

I AM A MAN. AND A CIMMERIAN.

I SHOULD BE WITH MY MEN... IN THE MARSHES...

JUST WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR IN THESE GODFORSAKEN SWAMPS, HROLF?

HA! IT COULD BE ANYTHING! A WITCH IN A VISION DIRECTED CONAN HERE AFTER HE AND HIS LEGIONNAIRES FAILED TO FIND THE SLAIN PRINCE CONN'S BODY IN GUNDERLAND.

HAD HE NOT FALLEN ILL HIMSELF, THE KING WOULD BE GALLOPING A LEAGUE AHEAD OF US EVEN NOW...

...AYE! THOUGH HE'S SEEN TWICE THE WINTERS WE HAVE, CONAN'S YET THE DRAGON'S DRAGON--

SOMETHING WRONG, HROLF?

--SILENCE--

LEONIDAS...

THWP

THLLK

... YOU MUST LEARN TO SENSE THINGS.

GRKOL GHIK GRKOL--YOTHIK GOK

HOLD!

SYAN-LIN, WHAT IS IT?

SYAN-LIN? I FORGOT THE CAPTAIN SAYS YOU'RE SPARING WITH...

...WORDS...

THE BEAR'S HEAD...TORN RIGHT OFF, AND THOSE REEKING PUDDLES OF SLIME...

CAPTAIN, WHAT IS SYAN-LIN DOING?

POSSIBLY SAVING YOUR YOUNG LIFE, BOY.

SEE HOW THE SMALL CREATURE DISSOLVES? THAT MAY WELL HAVE BEEN YOU.

THE FIRST LAW OF THE BLACK DRAGONS! KNOW WHAT YOU'RE UP AGAINST!

BLACK SORCERY.

ELSEWHERE IN NORTHERN AQUILONIA LIES THE CASTLE OF ONE **BARON MALORIC** QUINTESSENTIAL STALWART OF AQUILONIA'S COUNCIL OF BARONS...

...AND MALEVOLENT *TRAITOR* TO CONAN'S THRONE.

IS HE...IS HE THERE, WIZARD?

IS CONAN AT THE SALT MARSHES?

HE MUST NEVER DISCOVER...NEVER EVEN *SUSPECT* THAT I, ONE OF CONAN'S MOST TRUSTED *ALLIES*...

...NOW SEEK HIS *OVERTHROW!*

I DON'T SEE WHY YOU JUST DON'T KILL HIM... SEND A LIGHT-NING BOLT TO STRIKE HIM DEAD. WHAT DO I *PAY* YOU FOR...?

INSTEAD YOU DRIVE HIM MAD WITH *GRIEF*... THOUGH YOU KNEW I HAD *LITTLE SUFFERANCE* FOR THE SLAYING OF RUNNY-NOSED WHELPS.

AND NOW THAT THE PRINCE IS DEAD, YOU SEEK TO DRIVE HIM MAD WITH FRUSTRATION. THE *WITCH* IN GUNDERLAND* ...AND NOW THE HORROR THAT AWAITS IN THE MARSHES...

...*ENOUGH* OF THIS GAME WIZARD. KILL CONAN.

*LAST ISH-- OWS.

KILL HIM AND BE DONE WITH IT, OR...

REST ASSURED, BARON, THE KING WILL DIE.

CONAN WILL MOST ASSUREDLY... SLOWLY... DIE.

IN GOOD TIME.

AT THAT MOMENT, A GARDEN IN THE ROYAL COURT OF AQUILONIA.

I AM PLEASED RADEGUND YOUR TUTOR GUIGEMAR, HAS YOU TAKE TO POETRY LIKE A NIGHTINGALE TO SONG

THANK YOU, MOTHER, BUT GUIGEMAR IS SOMETIMES A FUSSY OLD MAN

HOW HE RAISED HIS EYEBROW AT MY NECKLACE AND MUMBLED, "TSK-TSK, A LITTLE BARBAR?"

I SHOULD NOT BLAME HIM, DAUGHTER 'TIS UNUSUAL FOR A REFINED PRINCESS TO HANG A BEAR'S FANG AT HER NECK

BUT IT IS ONE OF THE FEW GIFTS FATHER EVER GAVE ME

OH, BOTHER!

THESE GUARDS FOLLOW ME ABOUT LIKE SHADOWS

WHY MUST I BE CONFINED TO THE CASTLE LIKE THIS, MOTHER?

PLEASE RADEGUND I AM CONCERNED WITH SO MANY MATTERS THESE DAYS, I COULD NOT BEAR TO WORRY FOR YOUR SAFETY AS WELL... MY SWEET CHILD

WITH IN THESE WALLS I KNOW YOU ARE PROTECTED

NOW WHERE IS MY LITTLE BROTHER?

TAURUS, ARE YOU IN THERE?

COMING!

TAURUS...?

YES, MOTHER?

HOW IS IT YOU'VE NOT VISITED YOUR FATHER OR INQUIRED OF HIS WELFARE?

CONN DID NOT WITHDRAW HIS HAND BEFORE THE BLADE FELL— BUT YOU, TAURUS—

CROM! TO BE CURSED WITH A COWARD FOR A SON!

HE IS YOUR FATHER!

HE WAS CONN'S FATHER! I DO NOT EVEN KNOW THE MAN!

YOU DON'T MEAN THAT

YOU WILL VISIT YOUR FATHER IMMEDIATELY

MEANWHILE

IF THERE IS SOMETHING SORCEROUS IN THESE SWAMPLANDS, CAPTAIN, DO YOU THINK IT MIGHT BEAR RELATION TO THE PRINCE'S DEATH?

I'VE NO ANSWER TO THAT, BOY

THE LAD MAY BE RIGHT, TARQUIN

AYE, YAMIR TAKE ME IF THE LONE SURVIVOR WHO REPORTED TO THE KING DID NOT MUMBLE OF SORCERY AS WELL AS SWORDS BEFORE HE FELL UNCONSCIOUS

STILL, HOWEVER WE'VE YET NO WAY TO CARRY TO KING CONAN. LET'S RIDE FURTHER

HOLD! WHERE'S MARMON?

HE THOUGHT TO SCOUT THROUGH THE TREES, CAPTAIN.

BLAST! PLAYING HERO WITHOUT ORDERS!

I [illegible] NOT HALF [illegible] HERE SEATTLE

AVE, SIR!

TARQUIN BELLOWS FOR YOU LIKE A BULL AT BRANDING!

CAPTAIN, COME QUICKLY!

AGAIN THAT THAT PETIO SLIME--

TO ONE SIDE SOLDIER!

[illegible]HY, HE'S [illegible]S COLD AS A NORTHERN GLACIER--!

ERLIK!

WHAT HELL-THING DID THIS ?!

BY MY FATHER'S SHADE IN VALHALLA, TARYLIN--

THAT DIABOLIC CROAKING--?

FOLLOW IT!

HIS FACE...

CURSE IT BOY ARE YOU COMING?

LATER THAT DAY, IN TARANTIA ..

AH, MORTAL ME, OUR BARONS FALL TO WRANGLING IN COUNCIL THESE DAYS...

WITH MORE RELISH THAN THE VINTNER FALLS TO TESTING NEW WINE!

MITRA GRANT ME POWER OF PERSUASION TO QUELL THEIR UNREST.

COUNCILOR PUBLIUS, HOW FARES THE KING?

QUEEN AYELET!

THE ROYAL LEECH PRESCRIBES YET ONE MORE WEEK OF REST, LADY AYELET

THEN ONE MORE WEEK I'LL ABIDE...

.. FOR I'LL NOT RETURN TO MY THRONE IN SHEM 'TIL I SEE CONAN MENDED

OF COURSE AS SUITS YOUR.., LADYSHIP ?

... OH MORTAL ME...

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS, QUEEN ZENOBIA!

COUNT TROCERO

YOUR MAJESTY

SO, AT LONG LAST A MEMBER OF THE IMPERIAL FAMILY DEIGNS TO GRACE THIS COUNCIL WITH A ROYAL PRESENCE!

YOUR QUEEN WOULD ADDRESS YOU NOBLEMEN

F BARON AEMILIUS WILL OBSERVE PROPER DECORUM

DECORUM BEFORE MERE *FIGUREHEADS?!*

PRAY TELL, THESE SEVERAL WEEKS SINCE AQUILONIA'S PRINCE WAS SLAIN--

--WHAT HAS *KING CONAN* DONE TO STEER THE HELM OF STATE BUT BASK IN PRIVATE MELANCHOLIES?

LITTLE WONDER ASSASSINS SOUGHT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR BROODING MONARCH!

COUNT TROCERO AND PROSPERO OUR APPOINTED REGENTS, HOLD THE REALM TO A STEADY COURSE.

TROCERO AND PROSPERO-- LACKEYS BOTH!

THE QUEEN SPEAKS TRUE WHEN THE BLACK DRAGONS RETURN-- WITH INFORMATION CONCERNING THE PRINCE'S DEATH WE TRUST THAT MATTER SHALL BE LEFT BEHIND US ONCE AND FOR ALL

MILADY--?

THEY HAVE SEEN MY CONCERN, TROCERO. I PRAY MITRA THEY TRUST ME.

THAT NIGHT.

'TIS UNCANNY WHATEVER IT WAS THAT KILLED MARKON HAS VANISHED.

NOT A TRACE OF ITS PRESENCE IS LEFT ON THE DRY BRUSH OR ARID SWAMPGRASS ABOUT THIS MARSH, TARQUIN

YET, BY YMIR, METHINKS THIS SUDDEN SILENCE PORTENDS EVEN *MORE* BLOODY HORROR THAN THAT DEVIL'S CHATTERING WHICH DREW US HERE TO BEGIN WITH

DEVILS OR NO, WE'D BEST CAMP THE NIGHT

COME MORN, WE'LL TAKE UP THE SEARCH...

...FOR I'D SOONER FACE A HOST OF SCREECHING DEMONS THAN CONAN ENRAGED...

...AS HE'LL BE SURELY IF WE RETURN WITH EMPTY HANDS

MARK YOU THE LAD LEONIDAS, CAPTAIN?

"AYE, HROLF I DO THINK HE ENTERTAINS SECOND THOUGHTS OF HAVING SOUGHT US"

THERE S THAT DAMNED STINK OF CARRION AGAIN--!

WHERE IN THE NAME OF SEVEN HELLS IS THAT INFERNAL TRILLING COMING FROM ?!

GRKOL

GRKOL

CHIK

THE WOODS--?

BUT TANGJIN, WHAT IF OUR BLADES ARE OF NO USE . I MEAN, IF THERE S SORCERY--

WORRY FOR YOUR *NERVE*, NOT YOUR WEAPON BOY

BLAST IT! SILENT AGAIN--

HOLD!

OUR TORCHES--!

THE NOISE--?

BEHIND US--!

MITRA PRESERVE OUR SOULS.

BLOOD MUCK

IT IT OOZES FROM THE MARSH ITSELF!

I...I..

BLAST IT BOY...DON'T JUST STAND THERE LIKE A STATUE!

IT IT HAS NO FORM, JUST A QUIVERING, OBSCENE

LEAVE THE WORDS TO POETS AND FIGHT FOR YOUR *LIFE* NOW BOY!

SKLUSSH

NO! IT. IT--

SKLUP!

SYAN-LIN! I'M ..I'M BURNING--

SKLAP

SKLIF

SKLAP!

MAYHAP WE CAN PIERCE ITS UNDERBELLY AS IT MOVES ACROSS THE TREE!

SENTOR SWALLOWED IN SLIME--!

ERL K BLAST YOU TO THE BLACK PITS OF OBL V ON WHENCE YOU VE CRAWLED HORROR!

YMIR! I'M BURNING!

CAN'T BREATHE-!

NO! IT ENGULFS US!

NO! TH S MORN I ANSWERED TARQU N I WAS NOT AFRAID TO DIE ..

AND BY MITRA, I'LL NOT FAIL MY FELLOWS!

MY W NESACK

THE SUPERNATURAL CANNOT ABIDE FIRE--

--SO I LL SET TORCH TO DRY BRACKEN

AND RING THE HORROR WITH FLAME

IT'S GONE BACK TO WHATEVER HELL SPAWNED IT!

IS THIS WHAT I HAVE TO LOOK FORWARD TO AS A BLACK DRAGON...? HORROR... DEATH

FAILED

THOUGH THE VISION FADES, I CAN SENSE THAT THE BLACK DRAGONS YET LIVE THUS CONAN, YOU MUST LIVE

GOOD CONAN'S DEATH MUST NOT BE AS QUICK AND SUDDEN AS THAT FOOL MALORIC WOULD HAVE IT. FIRST HE MUST BE MADE TO SUFFER

SUFFER PAIN DISGRACE..

SUFFER AS I HAVE SUFFERED.

GARGOYLE! ATTEND.

FLY TO THE MARSHLANDS DELIVER THIS CLOAK AND THE SIGNET RING OF THE SLAIN PRINCE.

THE BLACK DRAGONS WILL DELIVER THESE TO CONAN.

AT LAST HE SLEEPS SOON HIS STRENGTH WILL RETURN

NEVER HAS THE KINGDOM KNOWN SUCH UNEASE, NOR I SUCH ANXIETY AND CONCERN ...AND YET I FEAR...

THAT THE DARK DAYS HAVE ONLY BEGUN

IT WAS NO DREAM-- WE'RE ALIVE!

HA, LAD! IT'S TO YOUR CREDIT WE LIVE TO TELL OF THIS ADVENTURE

HROLF I AM PROUD TO BE A DRAGON

WHAT IS T STAN-LIN

-- DROWN ME IN THE STYX IF THAT BLOODIED CLOAK S NOT E IN TH THE ARMS O BARON AE

THIS THEN IS THE *CLUE* FOR WHICH WE'VE BEEN SENT!

PERHAPS BARON AE WILUS HAD A HAND IN OUR PRINCE'S DEATH!

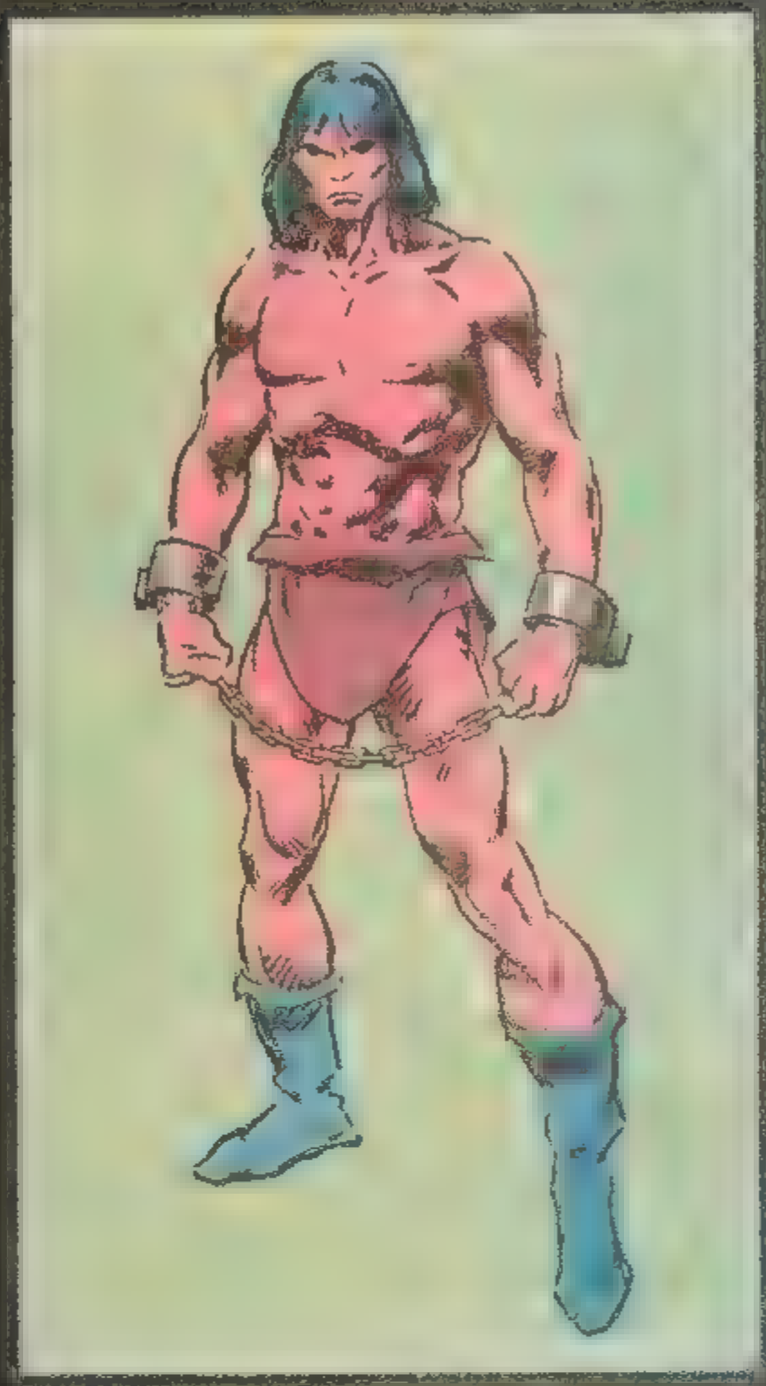
TO AQUILONIA DRAGONS THERE ARE QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED.

...AND VENGEANCE TO BE EXACTED!

Alan [illegible]
Geoff Isherwood
Rick Parker
George Roussos
[illegible]
Larry Hama
Jim Shooter

NEXT: ORDEAL

Prince Conan II, eldest son of Aquilonia's king, fell prey to a murderous band of assassins while on a diplomatic mission in Gunderland. Alone, left for dead, the young prince (who goes by the sobriquet of "Conn") was weeks later captured by a roving band of slavers. After several weeks of conditioning and some considerable beefing-up, the slavers now lead their recalcitrant property to the slave block in Corinthia . . .



by Alan Zelenetz
and Marc Silvestri

Stan Lee PRESENTS:

CONAN

SON OF THE BARBARIAN KING

I MARKET SQUARE NEAR THE ROAD OF KINGS IN CENTRAL CORINTHIA.

WHAT?! ONLY ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY PIECES OF GOLD?!

ARE YOU BLIND?

I WON'T LET THIS ABLE-BODIED CREATURE GO FOR LESS THAN TWO HUNDRED.

I MUST HAVE TWO HUNDRED

DO I HEAR TWO HUNDRED?

AH TWO HUNDRED GOING ONCE... TWICE--

--SOLD TO THE LUCKY GENTLEMAN OVER THERE FOR TWO HUNDRED GOLD PIECES.

DID I NOT TELL YOU THE WHELP WOULD FILL OUR PURSES FOR US?

LETTERED BY RICHARD PARKER COLORED BY GEORGE ROUSSOS EDITED BY JIM OWSLEY

HURRY IT UP THERE, WILL YOU?

LEAN AND SOLID YES, FATHER WILL BE PLEASED.

WE'VE NOT OWNED SUCH CLEAN MUSCLE IN A WHILE.

COME, CONNE, I'LL HAVE THE DOG'S SHACKLES

NOW STEP TO IT, SLAVE!

URGG!

DO YOU BALK THERE, MULE?

KEEP YOUR EYES TO THE DIRT

THOSE FRUIT STALLS ARE FOR FREE MEN ONLY.

BLAST YOU—I *AM* A FREE MAN! I'M A *PRINCE!*

A PRINCE
OF IT?

AND I'M A
KUSH TE
NURSEMAID!

HYAA

TUP

OH!

OOPH!

KOFF!
KOFF!

THERE'S THE PRICE OF TALKING BACK TO YOUR MASTER, SLAVE!

SKRUNCH

SOON, INSIDE A NOBLE'S ESTATE...

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO WASH THE STINK OFF ONE BARBARIAN?

FASTER, I SAY!

BEFORE I TAKE THE LASH TO YOU, GIRL!

IT IS DONE, BROTHER

GOOD NOW LET'S SHOW THE CUR OFF BEFORE WE KENNEL HIM.

AND.

A GOOD PURCHASE, RUMOLFO

THE HARVEST DRAWS NEAR, AND A BROAD PAIR OF SHOULDERS LIKE THESE WILL SERVE US WELL IN THE FIELDS

YOU MAY PEN H M NOW

ENOUGH! PEN ME, WILL YOU?!

NAY I'LL HAVE MY FREEDOM--

--OLD MAN--!

SLAP!

FATHER, WHAT--?

WHO CALLED FOR YOU GIRL?

GET BACK TO THE SCULLERY

RUNOLFO--

--I BELIEVE A TASTE OF OUR DUNGEON.

. OUGHT TO CURE THIS YOUNG STALLION..

... OF BUCKING HIS REINS

I SAID TO THE KITCHEN WITH YOU!

FORGIVE ME, SIR.

SOON..

CRREE

WHO—?

SHH. WE MUST WHISPER.

I HEARD MY BROTHER JESTING YOU WERE A PRINCE.

'TIS TRUE YOU DO CARRY YOURSELF REGALLY.

HA! I'VE QUICKLY LEARNED THAT WITHOUT HIS ROYAL SIGNET AND TRAPPINGS THE PRINCE IS GOOD AS DEAD.

NO MAN BELIEVES ME

CAN'T YOU SEE? I'M A SLAVE IN IRONS--

PLEASE, THEY'LL HEAR YOU

I BELIEVE YOU.

IF..IF I COULD FREE YOU FROM HERE, WOULD... WOULD YOU TAKE ME WITH YOU?

WHAT MADNESS--?

MY MOTHER'S LONG DEAD, AND I AM NAUGHT BUT A SERVANT GIRL TO MY STEP-FATHER'S HOUSEHOLD

THE PORTCULLIS BEYOND THE DUNGEON IS ALREADY RAISED AND A FRESH HORSE AWAITS

ONLY I BESEECH YOU. LET ME FLY WITH YOU!

UNFETTER ME, GIRL AND I'LL DRAPE YOU IN ROYAL ERMINE

YOU'LL OWN DIAMONDS THE SIZE OF APPLES AND RUBIES AND EMERALDS

FOR 'TIS TRUE-- I AM CONN, CROWN PRINCE OF AQUILONIA.

MITRA BLESS YOU, GIRL YOU'RE AS DARING AS YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL, LIKE MY MOTHER, THE QUEE--

SO, YOU LITTLE WITCH! IT'S YOU WHO PURLOINED THE PASSKEYS!

THIS NEW SLAVE'S TURNING OUT TO BE FAR MORE TROUBLE THAN HE'S WORTH!

I'LL DEAL WITH THE DOG FIRST

THEN I'LL BEAT SOME SENSE INTO THAT STRUMPET'S SKULL OF YOURS!

WHAP

THE DEVIL TAKE YOU!

CONN! TO THE PORTCULLIS!

QUICKLY, GIRL!

WHY, YOU TREACHEROUS--

MMMM

MURDERER!

HO, RUNOLFO! WHAT IS THAT RUCKUS BELOW? WE'RE COMING!

I'LL AVENGE--

BRING ME THE BOY, SOLDIER. I WANT HIM TO SEE THIS.

YES, KING CONAN.

LOOK, CONN, AND LEARN--

-- NO MATTER HOW DAUNTING THE ODDS, VENGEANCE MUST BE TAKEN!

NO, FATHER.

I WOULD AVENGE HER, BUT I AM UNARMED--

--THEY'LL OVERWHELM ME...

...AND WHAT VENGEANCE WILL I HAVE ACHIEVED THEN?

A GIRL... WITH NO NAME...

TO BE CONTINUED...

KING CONAN

% MARVEL COMICS GROUP
387 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10016

JIM OWSLEY
EDITOR

Okay:

The Dreaded Thursday has arrived, in which KING CONAN #20 is bound to come out here in Washington. I've only got one thing to say to you jerks. If Prince Conn actually dies in that issue I'm going to cut you into tiny pieces with my broadsword and then flay you into even tinnier bits of mince-meat, and finally scatter you to all of the earth's quarters. Do you hear me?

Signed
Conan The King

Dear Alan, Marc, and Jim:

CONAN THE KING #20 was magnificent. Accept no substitutes.

Michael Kanterovich
Hollis, N.H.

KING CONAN #20:

It was more moving than X-MEN #137. It was better than DAREDEVIL #181. Alan Zelenetz, I have never thought of you as a truly magnificent writer. From now on, I shall never think of you as anything else.

David Carragher
No Address Given

Dear Editor,

Ah,. it's the long-awaited (and long-heralded!) issue #20. "The Prince Is Dead" it says. Well, it certainly was better than the average KING CONAN— oops, CONAN THE KING— issue, if not quite up to the exalted standards of the advance ballyhoo (but then, what could have been?). I applaud you for showing on the last page what every reader must have strongly suspected: Conn is not, in fact, dead. Now if only he doesn't have amnesia! This removes some cheap suspense from next issue, but still leaves many valid tensions going. Like, how will Conan and Zenobia react to Conn's "death" (personally and royally)? And, what battles of survival lie ahead for Conn? Will this act precipitate an insurrection?

Congratulations also on one of the more skillfull and inconspicuous recappings of a hero's career.

T.M. Maple
Toronto, Ontario

No, T. M., Conn doesn't have amnesia! And no, Conan won't be going off on an endless quest for him, as some of our other readers thought. Sorry, second-guessing us just ain't that easy, folks . . .

Dear Jim Owsley:

This is almost typical of Marvel. You promised, but didn't deliver! Of course, thank the stars, the Prince is NOT dead, and the cover by Michael Kaluta was marvelous, and the splash page inked by Marvelous Marie Severin was splendid, and the new logo is the best yet! But... sheesh! Look at the rest of the book! Inked by so many different people (and yet, unlike the X-MEN ANNUAL, you never told us just who inked what and where) that you don't know which is which and what is what!

Jon Turnbow
Olympia, WA

Well, Jon, we thought we'd simply name the artists who worked on "The Prince Is Dead", and then leave it up to our sharp-eyed readers to write us and tell us who did what. Y'know, sort of a "be the first on your block to correctly name..." But, wow, we didn't get a single letter specifying who inked where. The torrent of mail that landed on us following the release of issue #20 was mostly from readers so blown away by the story that they were unconcerned by the gang of ten who inked it. However, for the benefit of yourself and anybody else who wants to know, the lineup went something like this: Page 1 was MARIE SEVERIN; 2-7 was MIKE GUSTOVICH; 8-12 was DAVE SIMONS; 13-15 and 18-19 was CHARLES VESS; page 16 was JOSEF RUBINSTEIN; 17,20, 25-28 was JUDITH MARCOS (Pablo's daughter and ace protogé, 'natch); the framing panels for pages 21-24 and page 34 were done by JACK ABEL, and those for pages 37 and 38 were inked by HARRY CANDELARIO and RON FONTES respectively; pages 37 and 38 were inked by MARC SILVESTRI; and all the flashbacks were inked by NED SONNTAG.

Dear Marvel,

Thank you!! You have brought me back to Marvel!! For a time I wandered astray, but KING CONAN #20... oops, CONAN THE KING #20... has brought me back to your pages, as avid a reader as ever, if not more avid.

Special thanks should go to Alan Zelenetz and Marc Silvestri for their superb jobs on writing and drawing this story. Alan has written an extremely enchanting story which made me feel almost like part of the action myself. I was completely surprised when Conn was shown alive at the end! Please keep him that way...

Robert Dowd
Magnolia, MA.

We'll think about it, Robert.

Dear Aquilonians:

The Michael Wm. Kaluta cover for CONAN THE KING #20 (along with the new logo and corner symbol) were all works of art. The cover would make a great poster.

Joe Chiappetta
Broadview, IL

That cover actually *did* make a great poster, Joe. Full-color posters promoting "The Prince Is Dead" were hanging in comics specialty shops and other direct-sales outlets across the country. If you missed it, don't worry. We're going to send out copies of the Michael Kaluta promotional poster to you and all of the other readers whose letters appear on this page. Just our way of saying "thanks" for taking the time to drop us a line. See? Who says writing in to comic mags doesn't pay..?

THE PRINCE IS STILL DEAD

Dear Alan, Marc, and those 10 inkers:

Today I bought a copy of CONAN THE KING #20. I was very disappointed. The cover blurb on the book says Conn dies, but CONN DOESN'T DIE! I would've bought the book anyway, but I don't think it's fair to trick people into buying it.

Very sincerely,
Russ Cleverley
Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

I saw this coming. Long ago, when **Alan Zelenetz** and I started working on this project, we knew there would be some readers out there who would feel cheated by ***"The Prince Is Dead"***. Of course, I could dismiss the entire issue by pointing out the person saying "The Prince Is Dead" (or, actually scrawling it in his own blood as on the cover) is the Aquilonian Legionnaire who returned to the castle with Conn's blade and cloak. In fact, if you take a closer look at issue #20, page 10, you'll see the prince was wounded by one of the assassins, fell and hit his head. He was knocked out, but the Legionnaire (shaken from the ferocity of the attack) mistook this for death. No one here at Marvel ever said Conn would die.

Yeah, I could say all that. But I think it's more important to emphasize what the prince's death represents. Okay, Conn isn't dead. But as far as Conan, Zenobia, and all of Aquilonia are concerned, he is. Future issues of **CONAN THE KING** will focus on how Conan and the kingdom deal with Conn's apparent demise, and the dramatic chain-reaction of events that follow it. Hang in there, people. Down the road, you'll be glad you did.

Jim Owsley

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE
STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION
(REQUIRED BY 39 U.S.C. 3685)

1. Title of Publication: CONAN THE KING (formerly KING CONAN)
2. Date of Filing: October 5, 1983. 588-610
3. Frequency of Issue: 6X MONTHLY
3A. No. of issues published annually: 6.
3B. Annual subscription price: $12.00 for 12 issues.
4. Location of Known Office of Publication: 387 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016.
5. Location of the Headquarters or General Business Offices of the Publishers: 387 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016.
6. Names and addresses of the publisher, editor, and managing editor are: Stan Lee, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016. Editor: Jim Shooter, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016. Managing Editor: Jim Shooter, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016.
7. Owner (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, its name and address, as well as that of each individual must be given.) Marvel Comics Group, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016. Cadence Industries Corporation, 21 Henderson Drive, West Caldwell, N.J. 07006.
8. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities. None.
9. For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at special rates. (Section 411.3, DMM only). The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for Federal income tax purposes. (Check one.) ☐ Have not changed during preceding 12 months. ☐ Have changed during preceding 12 months. (If changed, publisher must submit explanation with this statement.)
10. EXTENT AND NATURE OF CIRCULATION
A. Total No. Copies Printed (net press run): Average no. of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 293,838. Single issue nearest to filing date: 293,715.
B. Paid Circulation: 1) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales: Average no. of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 109,132. Single issue nearest to filing date: 136,922. 2) Mail subscriptions: Average no. of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 2,537. Single issue nearest to filing date: 3,200.
C. Total Paid Circulation: (Sum of 10B1 and 10B2): Average no. of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 141,669. Single issue nearest to filing date: 142,778.
D. Free Distribution by mail, carrier, or other means, samples, complimentary, and other free copies: Average no. of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 649. Single issue nearest to filing date: 656.
E. Total Distribution: (Sum of C and D): Average no. of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 142,318. Single issue nearest to filing date: 142,778.
F. Copies Not Distributed: 1) Office use, left-over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing: Average no. of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 1,362. Single issue nearest to filing date: 2,861. 2) Returns from News Agents: Average no. of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 150,128. Single issue nearest to filing date: 148,276.
G. Total (Sum of E, F1 and 2 should equal net press run shown in A): Average no. of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 293,838. Single issue nearest to filing date: 293,715.
11. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

(signed) Ed Shukin — Business Manager

12. For completion by publishers mailing at the regular rates (Section 132.121, Postal Service Manual) 39 U.S.C. 3626 provides in pertinent part: No person who would have been entitled to mail matter under former section 4359 of this title shall mail such matter at the rates provided under this subsection unless he files annually with the Postal Service a written request for permission to mail matter at such rates.
In accordance with the provisions of this statute, I hereby request permission to mail the publication named in Item 1 at the reduced postage rates presently authorized by 39 U.S.C. 3626.

(signed) Ed Shukin — Business Manager

Bullpen Bulletins

LAST MONTH . . .

I ran out of space just as I was about to describe the best part of the Marvel Editors West Coast Trip!

Monday, August 8th — We leave sunny San Diego, driving north in our four LeBaron convertibles toward Los Angeles. We, of course, are Dennis O'Neil, Larry Hama, Louise Jones, Tom DeFalco, Mark Gruenwald, Ralph Macchio, Bob Budiansky, Carl Potts, Danny Fingeroth, and Allen Milgrom — all but one of Marvel Comics editors — plus me, the Supreme High Editor in Chief. Who is missing? Archie Goodwin, Editorial Director of Marvel's *EPIC Illustrated Magazine* and *EPIC Comics* unfortunately can't join us. Boy, is *he* missing the boat! We arrive in L.A. late in the afternoon and check in to the splendiferous Chateau Marmont Hotel — an incredibly luxurious and historic Los Angeles landmark. Some of us are given luxury cottages while the rest have to settle for vast suites. Very soon after arrival, almost everyone is in the pool. We go our separate ways for dinner, but meet later to zip off to Disneyland for the evening!

Tuesday, August 9th — We rise early and virtually take over a nearby restaurant for breakfast. Then we're off to "the studio" — *Marvel Productions*, where our animated cartoons for Saturday morning are produced. Head honchos David DePatie, Lee Gunther, and, of course, Stan Lee himself welcome us! We meet with Stan for a while in his snazzy office overlooking the courtyard, and listen to him describe all the Marvel movie and TV deals that are in the works — which *he'll* tell you about personally on an upcoming Bullpen Page! Afterward, we're given an enlightening tour, and then it's *lunchtime*! What do you know, they're throwing a party for us. Famous writer Harlan Ellison happens to be there, as does Marvel alumnus Steve Gerber, who's back writing (brilliantly) for us again, by the way. We have a blast.

That evening, we attend another party in our honor — a quiet, warm, friendly gathering at Stan's incredible home high up on a mountaintop in Hollywood Hills. Stan and his wife, Joan, and their daughter Joanie make us feel like kings! What a wonderful evening, splashing around in the pool, enjoying the view, and hobnobbing with the Old Master. (Just kidding about the "old" there, Stan.)

Wednesday, August 10th — Most of us head home, but a few stay to take care of miscellaneous West Coast business. Larry and Denny are needed at the studio to consult on the G. I. Joe animated commercials. Tom and I pay a visit to some of the nice folks at Mattel, and take care of other stuff.

Friday, August 12th — Back to the Apple.

What a trip! And *that's* how we spent our summer vacation.

YES, BUT *WHY*?

Well, all the little reasons add up — it was good for us to attend the San Diego Convention and meet the thousands of fans who attended, it was good to visit the studio and strengthen the bond between Marvel East and West, it was good to generate some publicity and good will . . . but here's the *real* reason — the editors I've gathered here at Marvel are the best comics editors in the world, bar none. They've worked their tails off for a long time now, creating new things, developing new ideas, keeping the legends soaring and making Marvel Comics greater than ever. Most of them have lost more vacation days than they've taken, and a few haven't taken a day off in years. They *deserved* a break. This trip — a little play mixed with a little work — they *earned*. And one more thing — besides being the best editors, these guys, every one, are among the best *people* I know.

There just isn't anything like relaxing and having a good time with people you love.

NEXT MONTH . . .

The absolutely true story of a Bullpenner's brush with death, and wait'll you hear who helped save the day. You'll swear we made it up . . .

Stay well!

Jim Shooter
Editor in Chief

THE HYPE BOX

MARVEL SUPER HEROES SECRET WARS #1 — The debut of this twelve-issue limited series is not only the biggest event of the month, but it's also the beginning of the most important series Marvel will publish this year! Last month, Marvel's greatest heroes and villains vanished in a blinding flash, and now begins the startling revelation of where they have vanished to! This series is destined to change the face of the Marvel Universe. When it's over things will never be the same again! Writer JIM SHOOTER (the Big Man himself) and artists MIKE ZECK and JOHN BEATTY (fresh from their stunning work on **Captain America**) have been holed up for weeks, working feverishly to make this *the* series of their careers. It takes you to a far distant galaxy, full of wonder and terrible fear, where the world's mightiest super heroes will face the greatest challenge of their lives! Here's where it all starts! So what are you waiting for? This one you cannot afford to miss.

THE MIGHTY MARVEL CHECKLIST

- ☐ **THE THING #11**
- ☐ **DAREDEVIL #206**
- ☐ **NEW MUTANTS #15**
- ☐ **CONAN THE KING #22**
- ☐ **DR. STRANGE CLASSICS #3** — The concluding chapters of this classic STAN LEE / STEVE DITKO story from **Strange Tales #136-138**.
- ☐ **MARVEL SUPER HEROES SECRET WARS #1** — The beginning of the most important series in Marvel history! See the hype box for more details.
- ☐ **FANTASTIC FOUR SPECIAL EDITION #1** — Re-presenting the classic **FF Annual #1** by STAN LEE and JACK KIRBY.
- ☐ **OFFICIAL HANDBOOK OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE #15** — The Book of Weapons and Hardware.
- ☐ **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #252**
- ☐ **CAPTAIN AMERICA #292**
- ☐ **THOR #343**
- ☐ **INDIANA JONES #17**
- ☐ **MOON KNIGHT #37**
- ☐ **MICRONAUTS #52**
- ☐ **CRYSTAR #7**
- ☐ **INCREDIBLE HULK #295**
- ☐ **AVENGERS #243**
- ☐ **CONAN THE BARBARIAN #158**
- ☐ **MARVEL TALES #163** — Reprinting "Captured by J. Jonah Jameson" by STAN LEE and STEVE DITKO, from **Amazing Spider-Man #25**
- ☐ **X-MEN #181**
- ☐ **ROM #54**
- ☐ **POWER MAN/IRON FIST #105**
- ☐ **G.I. JOE #23**
- ☐ **THE A-TEAM (Limited Series) #3** — Marvel's version of the TV smash.
- ☐ **FANTASTIC FOUR #266**
- ☐ **MARVEL TEAM-UP #141** — Featuring **Spider-Man**, **Daredevil** and the **Black Widow**
- ☐ **IRON MAN #182**
- ☐ **PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #90**
- ☐ **DEFENDERS #131**
- ☐ **STAR WARS #83**
- ☐ **ALPHA FLIGHT #10**
- ☐ **HERCULES (Limited Series)#3**
- ☐ **ELEKTRA SAGA (Limited Series) #4** — Concluding our re-presentation of the original Elektra epic by FRANK MILLER and KLAUS JANSON.

MARVEL MAGAZINES

- ☐ **SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #99**
- ☐ **MARVEL AGE #14**
- ☐ **MARVEL FANFARE #14**

EPIC COMICS

- ☐ **EPIC ILLUSTRATED #23**
- ☐ **COYOTE #5**
- ☐ **DREADSTAR #9**